

(STUDENT NAME OMITTED)

1st Amendment Reflection

The first amendment is a critical law that allows for the very existence of media, including that of Santa Teresa High School. It allows students to speak freely about school policy, events, and staff (in a way that doesn't jeopardize safety or well being). If a student has an opinion about a certain district policy, they have the freedom to write an opinion article in the newspaper about it. In addition, the newspaper can be critical (and appropriate) about anything school or not school related. The Santa Teresa broadcast can report on news as they see fit (again, in a way that is safe and school appropriate). When Jenn Pham started iMatter, a campaign to promote more funding to high school students, she had every right to protest the decision and broadcast her opinion in the Saints' Esprit, which is exactly what she did. She was even able to spread her campaign school-wide.

The concept of appropriateness in exercising the first amendment was particularly exemplified in *New York Times v. The United States*. Because of that case, the ST broadcast can't do things such as disrespect Santa Teresa High School. The same rule applies to the Saints' Esprit.

The idea of decency is also apparent in *FCC v. Pacifica Foundation*. Because of that decision, radio broadcasters cannot use inappropriate language in an effort to prevent younger listeners from hearing it. This is also why the Saints' Esprit Newspaper and the Santa Teresa Broadcast cannot use foul language. It is considered to be inappropriate to the listeners and/or readers on campus.

As mentioned before, the freedom of newspapers to discuss whatever they'd like is limited and that was made very clear in the case *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier*. A school newspaper published articles discussing teen pregnancy and several controversial issues that the school district had an issue with. While one may think that the newspaper had the right to write about whatever they'd like, the supreme court considers the District's say to have more standing because of the fact that they fund the newspaper. The first amendment only extends so far in such cases.

This example of regulation was again brought up in *Papish v. Board of Curators of the University of Missouri*. A student published 'obscene' material and the school wanted her to be kicked out because of it. This challenges the same idea expressed in *Hazelwood School District v.*

Kuhlmeier, which is whether or not a student has the right to publish whatever they'd like through media. However, unlike the other case, this case ruled in favor of the student, declaring that schools are no exception to the protections of the first amendment.

This variation in cases shows how interpretation is key when it comes to issues of the first amendment as well as the freedoms provided to students because of it.

Santa Teresa students are quite lucky when it comes to our freedoms in the media. Not only do we have the capability and right to have a media division at our school, but we also have the privilege to express our opinions and views in a way that is school appropriate and doesn't put anyone out, including the staff here at Santa Teresa. While some people may want to be vulgar in their expressions of anything school related or not, we are also fortunate to have the fair regulation of such through the first amendment, finding a middle ground to our freedoms and rules.